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NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

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THE INTERPRETATION IN THE
HONGKONG COURTS.

felt is well founded or not; we merely regret the fact that it exists, which in itself is a serious matter, for the matter was not as the magistrate ought to be under suspicion. Some short time ago a clerk in the Magistracy was dismissed, and it is difficult to say at what stage of the service the corruption recently discovered amongst the clerks would have been discovered were it not for the interpreters in the Magistracy. It is not. If it does, and the fact can be proved, no time ought to be lost in making a clean sweep of those officials; if it does not, we can only sympathise with the gentleman concerned on their being the subjects of unmerited suspicion, and express the hope that they will have the opportunity afforded them of vindicating their characters before a properly constituted commission. In either case, however, it will be readily conceded that the opportunity of corrupt interpretation would be practically done away with if Europeans were employed at the Police Court, or if one European were placed in the Magistracy, and allowed to exercise a close supervision over the Chinese interpreters. It is alleged in the second place that the Chinese interpreters are incompetent, that questions are frequently wrongly put and answers given which do not convey the meaning of the question. The incompetency in interpretation is a matter of doubt. An English house boy may prove himself a perfectly efficient interpreter in conveying a simple order to his master's chair coolies, but this is usually about the limit of his capacity. Police Court interpreters may in the same way be perfectly efficient when the examination is simple, but they are not so forward and yet break down amongst the intricacies of cross-examination, where a nice perception of the lights and shades of both languages is necessary and subtle distinctions have to be drawn. We believe that in the allegation of incompetency there is a considerable amount of truth, and that the incompetency is due to the fact that the main facts of a question or answer, and present them without the qualifications and setting with which their true meaning is inseparably connected.

There is undeniably a want of confidence felt in the interpretation at the Police Court, and the sufficient warrant for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the matter. Mr. MACLEWY intends to move for at the next meeting of Council. Whether the creation of a special interpretation department, dealing not only with the courts but with the interpretation in all the other departments, would be the best way of establishing the competency of the Chinese is a matter of detail which may be dealt with hereafter. One thing at least is certain. The expensive cadets, who were formerly styled student interpreters, can never, or rarely ever, be used as interpreters. Not one in a score could acquire sufficient mastery of the language in the time they have to study it. The majority of them choose to sit on the spot in the courts who have grown up in Hong Kong, but who must be sought and sufficient inducement held out to them to add a knowledge of the written character to their fluency in the colloquial. In the earlier days of the colony some serious attempt was made to secure really efficient interpretation, but this was not done in a fair and proper way, and with the exception of the appointment of Mr. BALL some seven or eight years ago nothing has since been done by the Government to improve the previously existing state of affairs. The assertions made by the Acting Attorney-General in the Council on Friday last were very positive, but we think they were not based on a correct examination. It may be asked whether Mr. ACKROYD is speaking only of what had come within his own knowledge or of the whole history of the colony. If of the former, his experience only goes back a few years; if the latter, his statements are as inaccurate as much of the interpretation in support of which he spoke. We have no doubt that he is stating that whenever we could obtain Europeans to do the work, and the Government has done everything it could do to get the best interpreters possible. Up to the present we have had no Europeans in the colony who were in any way able to act as interpreters except Mr. BALL. Both these assertions are untrue. There are many Europeans in the service, and have been in every way able to act, but their services have not been availed of. If the Committee to be appointed call for all the correspondence which has passed between the Supreme Court and the Government during the last twenty years they will find, before finding this statement simply untrue, that the Government had held out to Europeans to do the work for themselves? In the Police Court, certainly none at all. The emoluments there have hardly sufficient to attract even the best class of Chinese, except in the case of the First Interpreter, Mr. ACKROYD says further, that it is perhaps undesirable, if we could get good Europeans to do the work, suitable competent Europeans would present themselves, the Government would very quickly avail itself of his services." We are glad to hear that this is the present view of the Government; it differs materially from the view it has held in the past judging from its own past general remarks:—"So far as I know no person has been offered to the Police Court who had been declared very efficient," If the Committee will themselves put the interpreters through a brief written and viva voce examination in English they will be able to judge of how far this declaration is justified by the facts. English-speaking interpreters are not to be had, and as deficient in Chinese as the Chinese interpreters are in English unless admission to the service was obtained only through a very searching examination, which is a point not to be lost sight of. At present we believe there is no examination for interpreters, and we suggest that for most other appointments a word mark examination should be added to the constitution of the Committee. The subject is one with which a Committee composed exclusively of members of Council would probably not be the best able to deal. The Chief Justice should be of course be the Chairman, and the Committee should include one or two of the Heads of Departments conversant with Chinese, Mr. MACLEWY himself, one of the Police Magistrates, and one or two practising solicitors. Such a Committee would probably be able to elaborate a scheme which would place the interpretation in the courts on a permanently satisfactory footing.

THE ROOKERY AT LAPSAPWAN.

Mr. Maclewy's crusade against the Government on behalf of the squatters at Lapsapwan has caused no little surprise in the colony. The camp was a nest of lawless characters, and the only fault that could reasonably be found with the authorities in the matter was that they were too indulgent. Indeed, the Committee, who were appointed to inquire into the matter, had no doubt that they had come to believe that Government

varnishes and threats meant nothing and would never be enforced. If any similar case occurred, the Government would be advised to send a force to the frontier, and to advise the people by word of mouth, to post a written proclamation in the camp, bearing the proper official seal. The notice given should then be fully executed on the day named, instead of allowing repeated and indefinite postponement of time. As to the character of the population, recently arrived from the north, it is clearly shown in the correspondence laid out on the Council table. The Police report that while the women of the village appeared to work hard, the men, the greater number of whom wandered about the city in search of plunder, and one particularly notorious robber, were living in the village for some time, months, and even years, before they were arrested. The Afforestation Department also report that great damage has been done to the plantations by the depredations of the squatters. It appears, further, that their camp was in a most insanitary condition, and that they were keeping pigs without any of the precautions which are liable to be taken. On every ground, therefore, removal was desirable in the public interest. No injustice can be alleged in the matter, seeing that the occupants of the camp do not belong to the colony, but are Hakkas from the mainland, who simply availed of the opportunity of establishing themselves in a remote spot, and who have been engaged in their combined pursuits of pig breeding and robbery with impunity from taxation and supervision. One man, it appears, carried on the manufacture of tooth powder, a business which ought certainly to enable him to pay rates on the same scale as residents of the colony.

Pig-breeding is a useful industry, not to be discouraged where it can be carried on under suitable conditions. It is desirable also that the whole of the small area of cultivable land in the colony should be worked. It does not follow, however, that squatters are to be allowed to flock into the country, and that they are therefore free to do as they please, without regard to the laws as to licenses, &c. On the contrary, seeing that they come from a class which is of its poverty is likely to furnish a considerable proportion of criminals, a strict supervision should be maintained over them. As to the squatters at Lapsanwan, we believe that the repeated refusal to submit fully and honestly to the action taken by the Government is only held that the persons evicted belong to a class whom it is by no means desirable to encourage in the colony. Respectable hard-working squatters ought to be welcomed by the Government where there is room for them—and regulations might be framed to encourage the people to be encouraged to accept the conditions of a semi-criminal settlement such as that at Lapsanwan ought not to have been tolerated for the time it was. We fully concur with the Acting Governor when he says that these people "are entitled to no compensation, and it could be a most impolitic and unwise thing to do so." It is *ex officio*. It would inevitably encourage the squatters of their countrymen to come over from Kwangtung and do as they have done; a little down on Crown land without permission, and then, when either Government wanted to use the ground or their countrymen required of the military rules rendered their removal necessary, to demand compensation for removing." The extraordinary affair in connection with the Lapsanwan affair will probably put the Government on its guard against allowing any similar nuisance to grow up in the future. The camp was a standing menace to the public order of the colony and to the public health.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION AND THE SILVER QUESTION.

At last a Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into the causes of the depreciation of silver. This is one of the most important questions that have come to the notice during the present century, and the report of the Commission just appointed will be of the greatest interest to the colony. The depression has been rapidly growing since 1870, and the long continued depression in trade is due to the appreciation of gold, and the recommendation of Lord DUNDAS's Commission that a special Commission should be appointed to inquire into the subject shows the importance of the matter. The *Times* writes, after treating the bi-metallic agitation with supercilious contempt, now approaches it in a very different spirit, and without acknowledging itself a convert to bi-metallicism, as cleverly paved the way for such an acknowledgment. The *Times* intimates, too, that the Government are now not the subject. "It is," the *Times* says, "expressing a disrespect to the present Government to disregard but whether, as a whole, it has any strong opinions one way or the other. Of the ministers most immediately concerned Lord SALISBURY has had sufficient experience of the matter to feel a strong conviction in its support, and Mr. STANLEY, while the new Secretary for India, Sir ROBERT CROSS, though, so being with, is not held orthodox in financial matters, is not likely long to resist the pressure which will certainly be brought to bear on him in the same direction." It is certain that the Government are in a position to make a rational consideration, bi-metallic views must prevail. The fact is that the world's stock of gold is too small for the demands now made upon it, and it will become increasingly more so, unless and until silver comes to be used, for the commerce of the world is now so largely carried on in gold, and silver grows, and the chief commercial relations of the world rely solely on a metal ready in too small supply for the purposes of the world. It is not difficult to see that a financial catastrophe must come sooner or later. Various questions have been made for economising the use of gold, and for accepting silver as a standard. To be heard of for instance, at "If the Bank of England were permitted to issue £1 notes against a deposit of government securities in place of bullion, it is well known to all conversant with the subject that these £1 notes would take the place of gold in actual circulation, at least to the extent at present of the £1 notes in gold to be issued at present, as present lying idle in the hands of the Bank of England." To this Mr. STANLEY replies:—"To issue £1 notes the security of stock would release us from any overburdening now undergoing wear and tear at all over the kingdom. It would render our countrymen easy for the countries desirous of being able to pay in gold, and to the extent of the £1 notes it would be difficult to conceive how it could benefit this country in the present time. In time of struggle and difficulty or general war it would diminish our national strength." As a bi-metallic, I naturally regret that the Government have not taken the

in exchanging a good metallic circulation for a moderately good paper one, and I prefer entering our general circulation with good money at a fixed rate to meeting it with paper at an equally fixed rate. I hold to the argument that if it be impossible to fix the ratio between gold and silver, *a fortiori* it is better to fix it between gold and paper, and government promises to pay. Gill and I have for 70 years kept at the legal rate, and I am not aware that business have been at a fixed rate to meeting it with paper at an equally fixed rate for 70 years. It is evident also that there must be a limit to the possibility of economy in the use of gold, and when that point was reached the difficulty with which the commercial world is now contending would again make itself felt, whereas by adopting silver as full legal tender, the metallic supply would be permanent and unimpeded, so that it would be better able to keep pace with the increasing demands made upon it without any material disturbance of values as we have lately experienced, thus would any scheme for merely economising gold. The bi-metallicists are in the wrong in the way they have put their case to the satisfaction of the Commission, and legislation will, it is reasonable to suppose, speedily follow. The Times says:—“It may be that, as a matter of theory, bi-metallicists have added and can do nothing to their case. The old insuperable objection, that on the first of any great alteration in the ratio of value between gold and silver, such as laws and Governments are powerless to prevent, no artifice can prevent the metal of increasing value from going out of circulation, will seem as valid as ever it is to unbiased critics.” The objection here spoken of as insuperable is not so; it is, in fact, a point out, the ratio between gold and silver was maintained for seventy years, and a alteration in their relative value was effected, not from causes such as laws and Governments are powerless to prevent, it was directly due to the action of Governments in discarding silver as full legal tender, and the world is the wiser for it. The objection is clearly explained by Professor GOSWAMIS says:—“Let us suppose that the nations of the world adopt bi-metallicism at the ratio of 15½:1, which for the last seventy years of this century was about the average market rate. The assumption made as to the universality of the system at the rate of 15½:1 is one of the most important causes affecting the market rates. It will be longer possible for one nation at the same time to increase suddenly the supply of one metal and the demand for the other for the purpose of changing its coinage. But in reality the assumption involves much more than this. Suppose that owing to any cause whatever an extraordinary panic, for example—the market rate becomes 20:1, and there will be a tendency for the dealer in metal—to be withdrawn from circulation—and for the cheaper metal to be needed to gain the superior value of coin; in other words, everyone will become a seller of gold and a buyer of silver; the gold coins will be hoarded, and the silver coins will be thrown away. Consequently, however, the increase of the supply of gold and the diminution in the supply of silver in the bullion market will tend to raise the value of silver and lower the value of gold, and eventually the old ratio will be restored. This process is what is termed the *law of the market*, and the dealer is bound to take the safe of illustration an extreme case taken, such as is extremely unlikely to occur in practice, since the compensatory action would come into play as soon as the market rate differed in the smallest degree from the legal ratio. When we take into consideration the enormous stock of gold in the hands of some of the most important nations, such as the world's Bourses, and the fact that both gold and silver are metals which will be seen that only in cases of most important events could the compensatory action be so rapid. This doctrine of the compensatory action in the double standard has been before the world in a formulated shape for some time, and the Times, in its article, wholly ignores it. It is a doctrine which insuperably objects to the fluctuating values, but which, on the contrary, theory demonstrate the possibility of fixing a ratio which shall be practically for all intents and purposes absolutely stable.

PROPOSED JUBILEE MEMORIAL TO THE QUEEN.

The proposition made by His Royal Highness the Prince of WALES that the QUEEN'S Jubilee Memorial should take the form of a Jubilee Medal, and that the Medal is to be inscribed with the words, “The Queen Victoria, 1837-1907,” is one that should recommend itself to the consideration of Her Majesty's subjects in all parts of the widely scattered Empire. The Exhibition has proved such a marked success, and so calculated to have such important effects in elevating the people of the United Kingdom to the extent, resources, and wealth of the Empire, that it is not surprising that the mind is so much with regard to the various ways in which the protection of the nation should be a permanent force, and thus admit of an educating process being continued until the masses will know something of the duties and people of such remote dependencies as the Dominion of Wales, the Principality of Wales, the Falklands, and Fiji. The magnificent acquisitions from school geographies is apt to fade from the mind, but practical illustrations like those afforded by the Exhibition now open in London serve to crystallize this knowledge and render it permanent and enduring. The interest excited, too, in the distant provinces of the Empire tends to beget in the farmer between the old and the new, the East and the Greater Britain. The establishment therefore of a permanent Colonial Indian Institution in London deserves the most support, alike as a great educational centre, and as one more cord co-ordinating with strength the various British offshoots to the parent stem. In fact, however, we are fully prepared to concede that a strong support be accorded to the project, it should be given instead of, or in addition to, squandering the money on expensive series of beautiful illuminations and decorations to celebrate them on such a ceremony, general holiday being observed, the bells rung, the troops reviewed, various towns and cities decorated and illuminated, and large sums of money expended. It instead of illuminating the streets of the Empire, the money should be devoted to the construction of a projected Institution, it will amply suffice to provide a building worthy of the occasion—the Jubilee of the most illustrious Queens and Emperors, of the most glorious reign in the annals of English history.

THE “TIMES” AND DR. HO KAI.

The Times account of the Hongkong Court case Colonel and Indian Exhibition is undoubtedly the best that has yet been published.

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